

Message Text

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72

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 DRC-01 /111 W

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R 201505Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9881

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

UNCLAS LISBON 2568

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT SOCI PO

SUBJ: PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT DECREES BROAD AMNESTY
FOR CRIMINALS

SUMMARY: BROADEST AMNESTY AND PARDON IN PORTUGUESE HISTORY
FREES OVER 30 PERCENT PRISON POPULATION.END SUMMARY.

1. PORTUGUESE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE ANNOUNCED JUNE 15 ABROAD
LEGAL RELIEF FOR SOME 30 PERCENT OF ALL PERSONS IN PRISON
FOR COMMON CRIMINAL OFFENSES. PERSONS WHO HAVE SERVED ONE-
HALF THEIR SENTENCE (APPROXIMATELY 1300 OF THE 3880
JAILED IN METROPOLE AND ADJACENT ISLANDS) PARDONED AND WILL
BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY. MANY OTHERS WILL BENEFIT IN COMING
MONTHS FROM AMNESTY CONCEDED TO PERSONS CONVICTED OF CRIMES
AGAINST PROPERTY, IMMIGRATION VIOLATIONS, INFRACTIONS PRESS
LAW, AND ACTS OF INDISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS. NO MENTION
MADE IN DECREE LAW OF AMNESTY FOR THOSE CONVICTED OF CRIMES
OF VIOLENCE.

2. WORD OF IMPENDING AMNESTY CIRCULATED THROUGHOUT
METROPOLE IN LAST TEN DAYS, AND GOVERNMENT DELAY IN
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OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCING IT CAUSED WIDESPREAD DEMONSTRATIONS

IN A FEW MAJOR PRISONS. GOVERNMENT REACTION WAS TO
RELEASE LARGE NUMBER PRISONERS PRIOR TO PUBLICATION
AMNESTY LAW. THIS IN TURN BROUGHT FORTH DENUNCIATION
BY 300 STATE PROSECUTORS WHO UPSET OVER FREEING PRISONERS
AND MANNER IN WHICH HANDLED BY GOVERNMENT.

3. COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND DECREE OF AMNESTY FOR COMMON
CRIMINALS HISTORICALLY TAKES PLACE AFTER CHANGE IN
GOVERNMENT IN PORTUGAL. NEVERTHELESS MANY PEOPLE WILL
LOOK ASKANCE AT RELEASE OF SUCH LARGE NUMBERS AT TIME
WHEN NATION BESET WITH WIDE RANGE OTHER PROBLEMS.
PORTUGAL'S CONSERVATIVE MAJORITY MAY SEE AMNESTY AS
ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF PRECIPITATE GOVERNMENT ACTION AND
CAVE-IN DEMANDS OF MINORITY GROUP.
SCOTT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CRIMES, AMNESTY, TRIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LISBON02568
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740162-0058
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740629/aaaaayjy.tel
Line Count: 76
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 NOV 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 NOV 2002 by MorefiRH>; APPROVED <06-Nov-2002 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT DECREES BROAD AMNESTY FOR CRIMINALS
TAGS: PINT, SOCI, PO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005